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HEADQUARTERS, U. S. ARMY SECTION
MILITARY ASSISTANCE ADVISORY GROUP, VIETNAM
Saigon, Vietnam

MAGAR-OT (OP)

1 May 1962

SUBJECT: Lessons Learned Number 10

TO: See Distribution

1. GENERAL: A VC initiated ambush occurred in the vicinity of TRUNG LAP, BINH DUONG Province, 31st DTA, III CTZ on 4 April 1962.
2. PARTICIPATING UNITS: The Security (Rifle) Platoon of the Ranger Training Center, TRUNG LAP was the unit ambushed by approximately 200 VC.
3. MISSION: The routine mission of the Security Platoon was to clear a road to PHUOC HIEP (PHUOC AN) for vehicles transporting supplies to TRUNG LAP.
4. CONCEPT: The concept of the security mission was to deploy one squad in column formation along one side of the road, one squad in a skirmishers formation on the other side of the road, and one squad in column bringing up the rear approximately 200 meters behind the two leading squads.
5. RESULTS: The results of the security mission were partially successful by clearing the road, killing an estimated 30 VC, and wounding an undetermined number. This was accomplished through limited assistance from two Ranger Companies who arrived at the ambush site immediately after the Security Platoon had begun to withdraw from action. However, it must be recognized that the VC executed a well planned, typical "L" shaped ambush, which resulted in friendly losses of 12 KIA and 8 WIA plus 12 captured weapons.
6. LESSONS LEARNED:
 - a. A ROUTINE OPERATIONAL MOVEMENT OR ACTION MUST BE AVOIDED IF POSSIBLE. The Security Platoon performed the same mission on a periodic basis and normally deployed in the same formation. It naturally created an inviting target for the VC.
 - b. SECURITY ELEMENTS MUST CHECK OUT SUSPECTED AMBUSH AREAS: One lead squad failed to check out a wooded area along the route of march that was only approximately 25 meters on their flank. The area secluded the VC main body which included one LMG and numerous other automatic weapons plus rifles.
 - c. INDIVIDUAL REACTION TO AN AMBUSH MUST BE FAST AND AUTOMATIC. As soon as the VC opened fire, the BAR gunner of the rear squad and two flank guards immediately took cover in a ditch along the road and began to deliver

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highly accurate fire on the VC. These individuals were primarily responsible for the number of VC casualties, and prevented the VC from completely over-running the friendly position.

d. PURSUIT OF THE ENEMY IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING AN ENGAGEMENT MUST BE AGGRESSIVE. The VC were allowed to withdraw from the ambush site transporting large numbers of their dead and wounded. No effort was made to pursue the enemy even though the relieving friendly forces were superior in number and fire power. An aggressive pursuit would have caught the VC in a vulnerable posture.

7. The foregoing is for your information and guidance.

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